

## ***FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** April 19, 2018

**Agenda Item:** Madison River Recreation Plan – R3    **Division:** Fisheries

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 30 minutes

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**Background:** Madison River users have voiced concerns over boat traffic and crowding for many years, leading FWP to begin the process of developing a recreation plan for the Madison River. Region 3 staff organized a Madison River Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) in 2012 which included members representing fishing outfitters, landowners, anglers and local business owners. Recommendations from the CAC were presented for public review in 2013. In 2016 FWP reinitiated the Madison River process by conducting three public listening sessions, and in 2017 drafted a Madison River management plan environmental assessment and rules with the following recommended actions:

- Establish a cap on the number of outfitters at current use levels
- Restrict commercial use trips based on the section of river and current levels of use
- Designate a day of the week as non-commercial use in rotating sections of the river
- Prohibit the use of vessels or float tubes to gain access for angling in the two walk/wade sections of the river
- Prohibit commercial use on a portion of the lower Madison River
- Prohibit the use of glass containers on the Madison River from the outlet of Quake Lake to the confluence with the Jefferson

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** Between 2008 and 2011 FWP conducted satisfaction surveys and held public scoping meetings to gather information about Madison River user experiences and satisfaction levels. Public comment on the CAC recommendations was gathered in 2013. A mail-in angler survey and a year-long random onsite user survey were conducted in 2016-17. The proposed Madison River management plan EA and the associated rules are based on this information. If the Commission approves proposing administrative rules, the Department will publish the environmental assessment and proposed administrative rules simultaneously and take public comment and conduct public hearings. The MEPA and MAPA processes and timelines will run concurrently to streamline the processes.

**Alternatives & Analysis:** The Commission has statutory authority to propose and adopt rules governing recreational use of all rivers. Alternative A: do not propose the administrative rules, with the result that recreational use as it exists will continue. Alternative B: Propose the administrative rules and take public comment. After the public comment period, the Commission will have the option of approving, modifying or denying adoption of the rules.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** The Department recommends the Commission propose the administrative rules which were developed following the river recreation rules process and are socially feasible, legal, affordable, enforceable and reasonable to administer based on the CAC recommendations and public surveys.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission propose administrative rules on the Madison River and take public comment on the rules and management plan Environmental Assessment.